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**PATENT**  
Atty. Docket No. NMT-002

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

APPLICANT: Forde *et al.* CONFIRMATION NO.: 4305  
SERIAL NUMBER: 09/977,971 ART UNIT: 3731  
FILING DATE: October 17, 2001 EXAMINER: V. Bui  
TITLE: Over-the-Wire Interlock Attachment/Detachment Mechanism

Mail Stop AF  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

*[Handwritten signature: P. J. Lee]*  
*[Handwritten signature: Carter]*

**RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICE ACTION**

Sir:

This paper is submitted in response to the Final Office Action (the "Office Action") for the above-identified patent application, mailed from the United States Patent and Trademark Office on December 1, 2004. Applicants believe that no extension of time is required for the submission of this paper. Should Applicants be in error, and additional time for responding to this Office Action is required, please consider this paper as a conditional petition for an extension of time and conditional authorization to charge fees for this submission to Deposit Account No. 20-0531.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks** begin on page 9 of this paper.